THE
HISTORIAN
OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Website: hchsm.org

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

September 2025

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, September 18, 2025. Speaker will be Jim Codling. He will discuss the Canadian influence that affected the culture from New Orleans to the Mississippi Coast. He will include the explorers La Salle, d'Iberville, his brother Bienville, and the Acadian-Cajun settlers. ***Reservations are required*** and may be made by calling 228-467-4090. **Please call no later than *noon on Wednesday, September 17,*** to make your reservation. Seating is limited to forty-eight (48) people, and we need to order the correct number of lunches. **Served at noon, lunch is $15.00 for members and $17.00 for nonmembers,** payable at the door. The catering order is submitted on Wednesday at noon prior to the luncheon on Thursday. If you need to cancel your reservation, please call by noon on Wednesday prior to the luncheon if at all possible so that the society does not incur unnecessary expenses. It is catered by Almost Home Catering with Chef Michelle Nichols. The menu for the luncheon this month is pork loin, yellow rice, salad, yeast rolls, and chocolate trifle.

The 31st annual Cemetery Tour will be presented on Halloween night from 4:30-6:30 pm. Doctors, pharmacists, a nurse, a dentist, and others will appear, as we highlight "Health and General Wealth." We would love your help! We need actors, cemetery guides, and hosts at the Lobrano House. Call to volunteer. 228-497-4090

Pushmataha (c. 1765—1824), was a Choctaw Indian chief, who was greatly respected during his lifetime by Native Americans, Europeans, and Americans. He supported the U. S. in the War of 1812 and led his warriors into twenty-four battles against the British and their allies. He died in Washington, D. C. in 1824 and was buried with full military honors in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington.

Mississippi's Native Population after the European Intrusion

Edited by
Eddie Coleman

Through the centuries, the Mississippi Native American tribes had developed a self-contained lifestyle sufficient for their needs. The European intrusions beginning in the middle of the sixteenth century brought drastic change to the tribes and ultimately an end to their aboriginal lives.

Among the early European visitors was the Spaniard Hernando de Soto, who led a column of conquistadors across the Southeast in 1539, and entered Indian country. The Native Americans eventually tired of the intruders' demands for grain and other needs, and in 1541 they attacked the Spanish compound, killing several Europeans, destroying equipment, and finally forcing them out.

Next came the French from their settlements in Canada and the Northwest. In 1673 the Joliet-Marquette party met several Mississippi tribes during its reconnaissance down the Mississippi River. In 1682 a party of Frenchmen and Northern Indians, headed by Robert Cavalier de la Salle, encountered several tribes as they passed down the river. LaSalle's arrival signaled an effort by France to develop the resources of the region, exploit the water route, and thwart the English. In 1698 two English traders with a pack train of goods arrived in eastern Mississippi

THE
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Eddie Coleman, Editor
Lobrano House Director

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10:00AM — 3:00PM
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MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

and began trading with the tribes, offering cloth, guns, powder, shot, beads, knives, and other items. The Indians traded deer skins and Indian captives who were shackled and marched to Carolina and sold as slaves on the plantations.

In 1698 the Bishop of Quebec sent two missionaries to the tribes, and in 1699 Pierre LeMoyne Sieur d'Iberville sailed into the Gulf of Mexico. To check English influence, he invited Indian leaders to accept French dominion. The three populous tribes—Choctaw, Natchez, and Chickasaw—willingly did so.

French-English Competition

The struggle between France and England for political and commercial control over the lower Mississippi Valley had a destructive effect on the Native Americans. Their increasing consumption of European goods and reliance on English tools and weapons changed the subsistence hunter into a frantic businessman, searching for items to trade. As demand for pelts led to extermination of fur-bearing animals in the area, some native hunters crossed the Mississippi in search of new hunting grounds. But many hovered near the French settlements, eking out a degraded existence, their numbers decimated by smallpox, measles, and venereal disease brought from Europe.

The slave trade virtually exterminated several small tribes. The Chickasaws were fierce warriors and excellent hunters who collected rich pelts and captives for the English. French attempts to force the Chickasaws to abandon the English and expand agricultural settlements in the Natchez lands led to a series of bloody French-Indian wars in Mississippi, having the effect of integrating certain tribes and scattering others. By 1731 the Natchez nation had been erased. Between 1736 and 1752, war on the Chickasaws raged, but the French were unable to dislodge them.

Spoils of War

The Seven Years' War between France and England ended with the Peace of Paris in 1763. The British received the eastern half of the Mississippi Valley, and its Indians were received into British dominion.

Indian lands were administered by British officials who set rules on trade and protected the tribes from encroachment by settlers in West Florida. Immigrants from the British Isles, the West Indies, and the American seaboard colonies followed the British takeover. They traveled through Chicka-

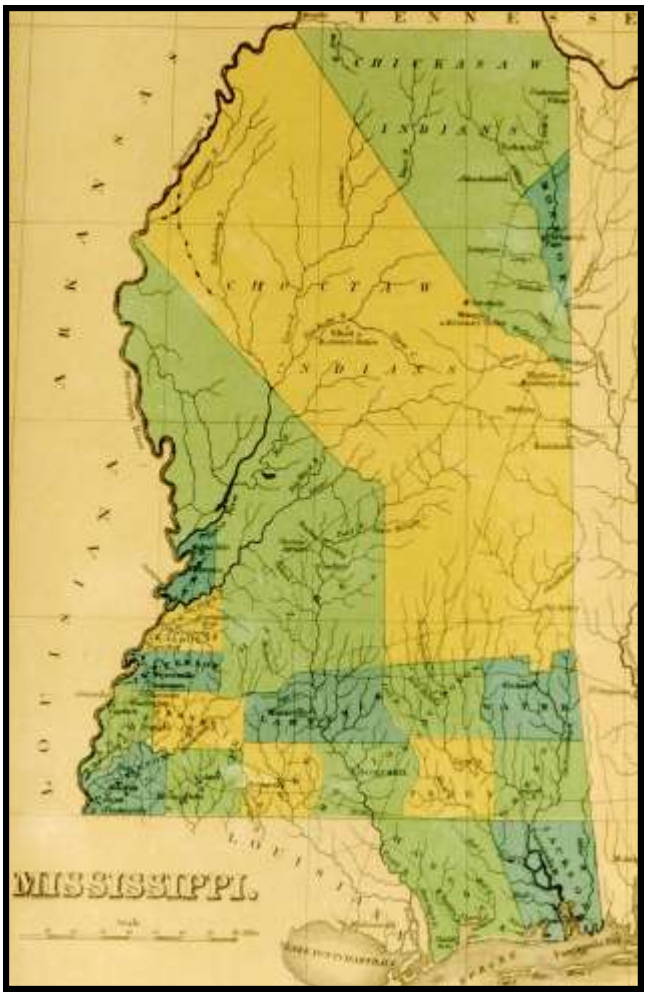
THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Had one not already experienced a life changing event of epic proportion prior to Katrina, it was a catastrophic event for many. It changed our lives and for some continues to affect our mental or emotional state to this day.

While we may not dwell on disturbing memories, each hurricane season may create a bit of tension in us. Perhaps the angst is not top of mind but dormant in our subconsciousness. When a storm enters the gulf, the tension increases or decreases proportionally to the movement of the disturbance.

When the fall season comes and we have been spared, we experience a feeling of relief as our focus changes to the holiday season and how fortunate we are to live where we do.

Chris, Roth
President



Early statehood map of Mississippi, ca. 1822. The three counties shown on the eastern border of the state from the Gulf of Mexico north are Jackson, Green, and Wayne. On their western borders are Hancock, Perry, and Covington. From the northern Louisiana border northward are Marion & Pike, Lawrence, and Hinds (the extremely large county with the angled eastern border). Finally (south to north) are Amite & Wilkinson, Franklin & Adams, Jefferson, Claiborne, and Warren. The area bounded by Alabama on the east, Wayne and Covington on the south and Hinds on the west is Choctaw land.

saw and Choctaw territory, with many of them squatting on Indian lands. Indian leaders demanded that the British survey their lands, set boundaries, and expel intruders.

The American Revolution

The British made use of Indian warriors in blockading American units in the American Revolution. After the war both Chickasaw and Choctaw leaders signed treaties with the United States. The Spaniards tried to lure them away from the Americans, but both looked to the Americans for guidance and protection. Choctaw chief Pushmataha and Chickasaw chief Piomingo warned the United States of growing Spanish strength. By 1811, each tribe had a federal agent whose duty it was to enforce the law on intruders, traders, and contraband and also to "civilize the Indians."

The Exodus

The history of the tribes in Mississippi between 1795 and 1837 is a chronicle of retreat, land loss, and diminished domains until the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations were annihilated as ethnic communities in Mississippi and relocated west of the Mississippi in Indian Territory. Events were shaped by organization of the territory of Mississippi, expansion of American settlements, and pressures by settlers on the federal government to reduce tribal domains and open new lands. The admission of Mississippi to the Union in 1817 created for the Choctaws and Chickasaws an impossible situation with an inevitable outcome.

Despite threats to their existence, the tribes confirmed their loyalty to the United States by disregarding Tecumseh's attempts to involve them in his confederation to make war on the States and also by providing fighting men for American armies.

Great pressure was applied by settlers to government officials to force the Choctaws and Chickasaws to surrender their lands. Rather than a total surrender of tribal domains and removal to Indian Territory, it amounted to a piecemeal nibbling at Indian lands until only a small core of each remained. Those remaining were subject to public and private, legal and illegal pressure, intimidation and exploitation until tribal leaders, disillusioned and cynical of government treaty obligations, prepared to leave.

Between 1816 and 1837 a series of treaties ceded millions of acres of Choctaw and Chickasaw domains in return for encouragement to evacuate to Indian Territory in the West.

The Choctaw Nation was liquidated by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830. The Chickasaws signed a total cession in the Treaty of Pontotoc in 1843.

Eventually the Chickasaws joined the Choctaws and colonized the western portion of the Choctaw Nation in Indian Territory.

Not all of the Choctaws in Mississippi moved to Indian Territory, however. About four to six thousand of them remained in the state, with living conditions for most of them being quite substandard. Rather than live on "Indian lands, others kept to themselves and shunned and were shunned by their fellow Mississippians. Some in Hancock County and in other areas of the state fled to the swamps and lived quiet lives there.

Notwithstanding Choctaw chief Greenwood Le Flore, the

son of a Choctaw princess and a French-Canadian fur trader, remained in Mississippi and flourished. He became an American citizen, a successful businessman, and a state politician who counted Jefferson Davis among his personal friends. Moving in the circle of elite society, he served in the Mississippi legislature as a representative and later as a senator.

By official count fewer than two thousand Choctaws remained in the state after 1930. But since World War II, the Choctaw Nation has flourished in Mississippi. Reorganization, the establishment of a tribal government, and changes in federal laws have helped the Indians take control of their lives. Philip Martin, chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians from 1978 -2007, strongly led in these changes. Through their own economic development, the Choctaws now have industries on tribal land which include automotive parts, greeting cards, direct mail and printing, plastic molding, and casino gaming. The Pearl River Resort, owned and operated by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, in Choctaw, MS, is one of their most lucrative economic ventures.

Even though European intrusion threatened to destroy the existence of the great Native American tribes, they have adapted, persevered, and endured. Threads of their native tongues have been woven into the fabric of American society and can be seen in such place names as Pascagoula, Yazoo, and Bogue Chitto. The abiding words of William Faulkner apply to these people. "I believe that man will not merely endure. He will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion, sacrifice, and endurance."

SOURCE:

Gibson, Arrell M. "The Indians of Mississippi" in *A History of Mississippi*, Vol. 1 ed. Richard Aubrey McLemore. Jackson: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973.

"Greenwood LeFlore." *Nationmaster.*12 Mar. 2010<http://statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Greenwood-LeFlore>.''

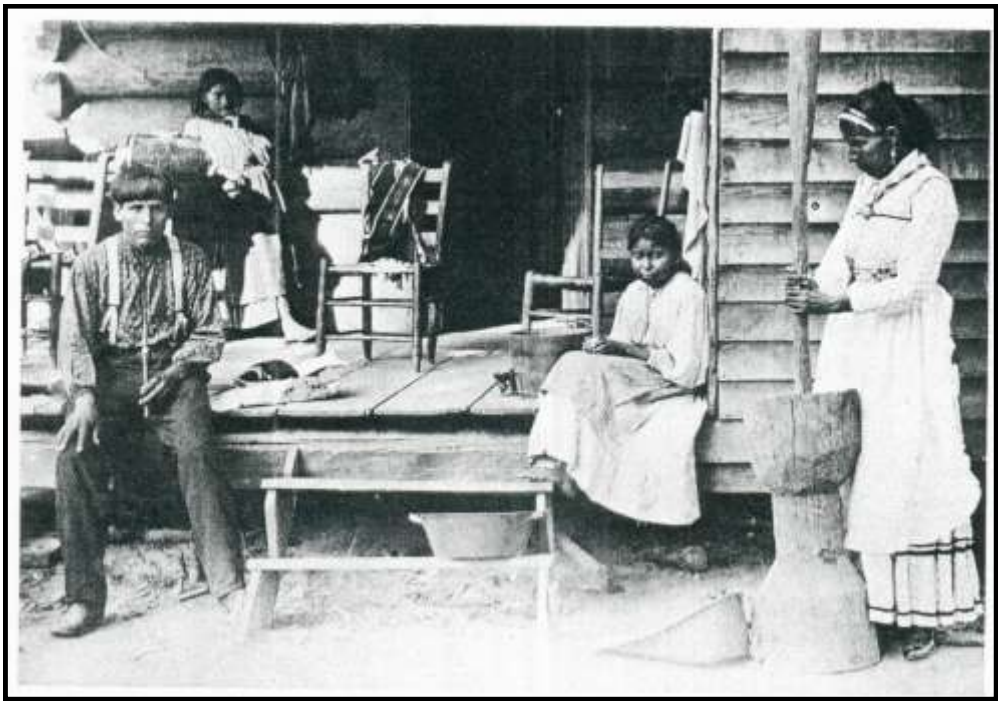
Devil's Swamp— 1830 Indian Hideout

Compiled and
Edited by
Eddie Coleman

Long before the advent of the French explorers, the area now known as Hancock County was inhabited by Native Americans, members of the Choctaw Muskhogean family. The area of present-day Bay St. Louis contained an Indian village called Chicapoula (or Chou-cou-poulou), meaning "bad grass." Living in this paradise, the natives hunted plentiful game such as venison and buffalo and fished the bountiful waters of the Mississippi Sound.

After the white settlers came, remnants of those early inhabitants moved farther from the Bay of St. Louis into an area known as Devil's Swamp and lived in houses mostly along Bayou LaCroix. The men continued to hunt and fish, but they also tanned skins, and all members of the tribe were constantly on guard against the depredations of occasional wolves. The women cultivated crops consisting of corn, beans, and rice, but chiefly rice. The children were taught to weave baskets, and the boys, to make blow guns. Shy with strangers, the Indians were, nonetheless, quite social among themselves. They enjoyed games, festivals, dancing, and singing. In fact, wedding feasts and dances could last for days.

Obviously, news of world events didn't move so swiftly in the 1800s as it does today with the internet and other modern media, so those Native Americans who lived in Hancock County didn't hear of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek early on. Signed in 1830 this pact allotted lands in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) to Mississippi Indians in



Mississippi Choctaw Family in 1908

exchange for their lands and those in Mississippi. The main thing these Native Americans were aware of is that white settlers were homesteading lands which had belonged to the Indians and had belonged to them for generations. Some of the Indians took what the U. S. government offered them and moved west to Indian Territory. A few even became rich when oil was discovered on their newly acquired land. Some of them moved to Choctaw lands near Philadelphia, MS, in Neshoba County. Those who didn't leave moved deeper into the marshes and bayous of Devil's Swamp, hiding out to continue their inherited traditions and culture.

Some of those few Indians, who remained in Hancock County intermarried with local blacks and whites and became a part of the rich cultural mix of people whose descendants in the area today. In addition, remnants of their culture may be found in arrowheads and other relics gleaned from the fertile earth of Hancock County. These few artifacts, some place names, and traces of noble blood in their descendants tell of a proud race discovered by the European settlers who first came to this newly found land in the late Seventeenth Century.

SOURCES:

"Devil's Swamp Was 1830 Indian Hideout." *Sea Coast Echo*. 28 May 1978, Heritage Edition.: 7B.

"Choctaw Tribe Really First Settlers Here." *Hancock County Eagle.* August 1958, Souvenir Centennial Edition. 25.

Dilville School Students, 1920

L to R (sitting) -Albert "Boy" Lusich, Eldon Moran, Jordey Johnson, Verdie Johnson, Lillian Lusich, and Sarah Favre;
L to R (mid-standing) Legier Lusich, Velma Zengerling, Herbert Zengerling, Claiborne Ladner, Rufus Lusich, and Carine Lusich;
L to R (back-standing) Luvinia Moran, Robert Zengerling, Clare Ladner, George Zengarling, and Arnevia Moran.
This information was given to the Historical Society by Luther Ladner.

INDIAN SCHOOL

By
Russell Guerin

Recently, the historical society was offered several old books and documents that were being discarded from the courthouse. Most had little historical value, but one stood out as a reminder that Hancock County still counted many native Americans in its population in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The article is a thin ledger-type book marked "Attendance Records—Indian School." It covers only a few years, 1882—1886, but interesting information can be gleaned from it. At the outset, it is evident that not all Choctaws were relocated during the period of Indian removal of the 1830s and 1840s. Some chiefs were actually awarded land under the treaties while other, less fortunate tribesmen chose not to leave and hid out in places like Bayou La Croix swamp.

In the period covered by the attendance book, it is evident from the 1880 census that groupings of Choctaws resided in some locations. Under Gainesville, for example, two pages are devoted to a section titled "Indian population," listing approximately eighty people in eighteen households. Another half page listed those in Pearlington.

Unfortunately, the ledger does not identify the locations where classes were held. While records were kept for three schools, only one clearly is shown as the Indian School.

On average, the Indian school had fewer than thirty students with girls outnumbering boys two to one. Both groups seemed to have excellent attendance. In some months no absences are evident. Age range was from five to eighteen. Last names are predominantly Favre, Taylor, and Yarby. From the census reports, it is clear that the latter also appears as Yarber and Zorba.

For each of the five years, the teacher was Maryann Zengarling. It is known that her family resided at least in part near Bayou La Croix, and the family burials are in evidence in the cemetery of that area. There is also a marker commemorating all the Choctaws buried there.

One oddity is that the Zengarling family does not appear in the census for the period studied.

Perhaps the most remarkable observation is that each school year consisted of only three months, and those were not always the same.

Although the ledger is identified as the attendance record for the Indian school, two other schools are included, but with different names. They are the Fayard and Lott schools, which were also for three-month periods. Both of these were taught by Mrs. C. V. Johnston.

It is not certain that the Fayard and Lott schools were for the Choctaw children. However, because of the similarity of scheduling and the fact that their attendance records are in the same ledger as the first-described school, it may be assumed that they were. Names that show prominently are Fayard, Carver, Fournier, and Lott.

The accompanying photo shows children in a Bayou La Croix class of 1920, almost forty years after the above-described schools. One may note a few similarities, however. One is the mix of ages in the group, and another is the presence of several children who may be assumed to be at least part Choctaw.

The history of Hancock County's Indian population is at best sketchy. Any information which would add to our knowledge of this important part of our heritage would be welcome.

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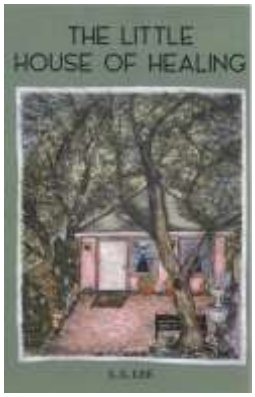

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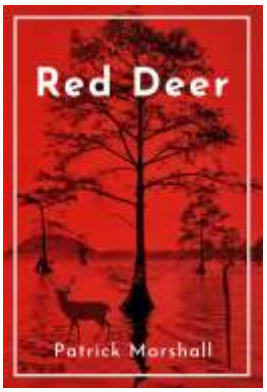

Red Deer is fantasy infused historical fiction. Jesse Walker, a 16 year old from present day Gulf Coast Mississippi, is transported back through time to the legendary birthplace of the Choctaw people, NanihWaiya village.

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